

Motherhood with a sense of humour

Dorianne Sager's prose may be breezy, but she delivers a comprehensive guide

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Clever title, clever book, though likely not what Dorianne Sager had in mind when she set out to save the world in 2000, having just graduated from the University of B.C. with a master's in journalism.

But that was BZ.

Before Zach.

Before she hit 30 and thought maybe it was time for a baby and -- boom -- before you can say "pull the goalie," she and husband Andrew found themselves in the delivery room wondering what to make of their proverbial bouncing baby boy.

That, essentially, is the premise of *Baby Is a Four-Letter Word* -- that brand-new parents really don't know what they're doing and that just may be a blessing.

Sager speaks well to that universal sinking feeling every new parent gets on the way home from the hospital, alone with baby for the first time and overwhelmed by the terror of the unknown.

Sager, now 34 and a stay-at-home mom to three-year-old Zach, does a fun, informative job of setting postnatal jitters to rest. She covers it all: weight gain, breastfeeding, sex after the birth, sleep deprivation, new dads, the inverted uterus, picky eaters, grandparents, boys vs. girls, dining out with baby, and toilet training.

She also touches on post-delivery incontinence and, as with most of the book, there is much humour in the examination of motherhood. "For 10 months after Zach was born," she writes, "I had to put on a pair of rubber boots before I sneezed."

Her prose is light and breezy -- chapter titles include "My Mother Never Told Me There Would Be Days Like This" -- but she also goes to those dark places that permeate new parenthood, including isolation and boredom. And in a chapter titled "An Inconceivable Lesson," she writes of the heartbreak of miscarriage.

Sager, who two years ago wrote a popular Vancouver Sun column called *Baby Steps* (essentially this book's first draft), is now expecting her second child and is moving to Kingston, Ont., to be closer to family.

Baby Is a Four-Letter Word is worth a read to prepare you, or even remind you, that when "you think about it, a toddler is really just a puppy with opposable thumbs."

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